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Leadership Competency Series

Creating excellence through introspection

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES / Successful leaders believe in the power of introspection to analyse and redesign their behaviour process, within and between people. They exploit their choices matching the choices of others to inspire, motivate and retain people, writes M R Chandramowly.

AFTER winning several archery contests, the young and boastful champion challenged a Zen master who was renowned for his skill as an archer. The young man demonstrated remarkable technical proficiency when he hit a distant bull's eye on his first try, and then split that arrow with his second shot. "There", he said to the old man, "see if you can match that!" Undisturbed, the master did not draw his bow, but rather motioned the young archer to follow him up the mountain.

Curious about the old fellow's intentions, the champion followed him high into the mountain until they reached a deep chasm spanned by a rather flimsy and shaky log. Calmly stepping out onto the middle of the unsteady and certainly perilous bridge, the old master picked a far away tree as a target, drew his bow, and fired a clean, direct hit. "Now it is your turn," he said as he gracefully stepped back onto the safe ground. Staring with terror into the seemingly bottomless and beckoning abyss, the young man could not force himself to step out onto the log, no less shoot at the target. "You have much skill with your bow," the master said, sensing his challenger's predicament, "but you have little skill with the mind that lets loose the shot." To bring out the best, the young archer had to redesign his behaviour process.

BPR 1 and 2

Business Process Redesign (BPR) is defined as "the analysis and design of workflows and processes within and between organisations". Let us call this as BPR-1. I would like to define BPR2 as "the analysis and design of Behaviours and processes within and between people". BPR2 is the critical analysis and radical redesign of human behaviours to achieve improvements in performance.

Knowledge, skill, experience is not enough to achieve leadership success. There must also be a balance among the body, mind and intellect. One could be highly skilled at doing something and still may not have an objective mind and intellect, which brings in a difference between talent and disciplined intellect. A disciplined body, alert mind and sharp intellect are most crucial for mastering leadership competencies.

Self-image to a person is as crucial as brand leadership for business. What is redesigning of behaviour? It is the need for the change in our mindfulness to become aware of our body, emotions, thoughts and self. An organisation aims to create a brand for itself in the market, whereas people put effort to create a leadership brand. Both rely on managing and balancing the internal and external factors.

Booz Allen Hamilton projects four fundamental questions for a BPR1 model. What do we do? How do we

do it? How well we do it? How well do we integrate and optimise? For BPR2, an aspiring leader has to ask himself: What is that I do? What would I like to accomplish? What are my life goals (short, mid and long term)? Then, how well I do it? BPR1 is about structure and resources. BPR2 is about identifying your competencies that differentiates from others. It is about understanding our capabilities and total personality. How well we do it? BPR1 - It is about systems, processes and controls. BPR2 - How focused we are? How disciplined we are? What is the mechanism and control we have, to measure the gap between our plan and results, our vision and reality? How well do we integrate and optimise? BPR1 is the leaders' ability to integrate and maximising the worth of men, methods, money, market and morals to get the best results. BPR2 is applying competencies to get best results by integrating and fine-tuning our body, mind, intellect, ego and consciousness.

Internal personality

The world is free to look at by one and all. But, do we look at it as the world actually is? We create our imagination, needs, securities and anxieties and that is how we see is the world. Thus, every person lives in his own world. Our individual perception of the world is tinted by two factors - likes and dislikes. We want to acquire things for our happiness and security. We would like to get rid of things, which are threat to our happiness and security.

These two aspects, our desires and dislikes are discernible in what we wear, what we eat, and what kind of people we are comfortable with and whom we adore and whom we detest. All our major efforts in life are disseminated towards gaining what we desire and get rid of what we dislike. Who wants a strained relationship? But, at times, our people relationship may get callous. We quickly observe and realign. Successful leaders, who are skilled in people competency, chose either "win-win" or "no deal" which is the best way to sustain relationship. They drop other options of "win-lose", "lose-win" or "lose-lose" says Stephen Covey.

Relationship refurbishment requires effort. One has to work hard putting effort to get rid of the squabble. Taking bath, filing papers, de-fragmenting computer, arranging things in order are the activities, to get rid of dislikes to preserve the desirable. Humans are bound by these two emotional forces - desires and dislikes. They are integrated in us. Understanding this integration of our inner personality becomes central for self-development. Leaders who introspect and develop themselves can only inspire others. They look out for options, consider available choices and adopt the best-suited ones.

Exploiting choices

Peter Drucker, one of our supreme management thinkers, points out one of the significant shifts in the human history. He says that, in a few hundred years, when the history of our time is written from a longer perspective, it is likely that the most important event those historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time, literally, substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. "And the society is totally unprepared for it." (Peter F Drucker - Managing Challenges for the 21st century - Quoted by Stephen R Covey in "The 8th Habit").

Impulses

The knowledge of deciphering this human choice, which differentiates him from plants and animals, evolved during the period from 800 to 300 B.C, the Axial Era as named by Karl Jaspers. Man for the first time, simultaneously and independently questioned the traditional pattern of life, in Greece, China and India, writes Dr S Radhakrishnan (The principle Upanishads). "Master the mind and you master the world" - was their key message.

Our life constantly pulsates through three equipments, body, mind and intellect, in that order from gross to subtle. Subtler than intellect is our ego, which is controlled by consciousness. Life throbs through our body, mind, intellect, ego and consciousness.

Gross body gets aligned support from the subtler mind and intellect. Subtler than mind and intellect is "ego". When I say, "my mind" and "my intellect", the "my" refers to the ego. When I say "my ego", "my" is referred to consciousness. When you spot a snake on your path, your sight of snake is flashed to the mind, which consults the intellect, which quickly gives a judgment. You respond quickly for "fight" or "flight".

The physical body through five organs of perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) receives stimuli from sense objects of the world. The stimulus is felt by the mind (through sight, sound, smell, taste and touch). Now, the received variety stimulus is ready to react on our sending responses through the five organs of action (hands, legs, speech, genital organ and organ of evacuation). We send out response to a stimulus in two ways. Response guided by impulses and response guided by intellect. One is the spontaneous response, where we react at the call of the mind, without applying intellect, the discriminating and judging faculty. In the other way, where our response is guided by intellect, the faculty of intellect discriminates and judges our thinking and reasoning. This reflection reduces the impulsiveness and drives us towards proactive response.

This is the choice available for humans. People have their choices. They decide what to like, what to discard, how much to work based on these three factors - desires, dislikes and the stimuli outside. Employee desires and dislikes are given. Organisations use different assessment methods and interviews to find out this, mostly to decide the job fitment rather than understanding deeper personality. When employee desires and dislikes are deep seated as hardwired individual nature, employers may not have much control over that. They are left with the third factor, i.e., creating suitable stimuli and understand an employee by using BMIEC knowledge. Only after this stage, a suitable motivation theory can be applied. When we do not consider an individual's intellect, ego and consciousness, people feel that they are not respected. A blind application of motivation theory through salary hikes; variable pay or ESOPs cannot satisfy employees of the current knowledge society. Various attempts are made and new methods are tried out to motivate and retain people.

Human desires increase, as the mind develops to fly

Man plans and schemes to find ways to satisfy

Human Development is that which is linked to mind

Infinite is its elevation and excellence to find (Dr D.V.G's Kagga - 211)

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